

**ABSTRACT**

The present invention relates to recombinant hepatitis C virus (HCV)-derived nucleic acids and to stable rapidly growing cell clones derived from human hepatoma Huh-7 cell line and supporting high titer replication of said recombinant HCV nucleic acids. The subgenomic HCV replicons and cell clones of the instant invention represent the *in vitro* system of choice for studies of HCV propagation, anti-viral drug screening, and vaccine development.

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